

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nutritious Food is the Fuel that Keeps Our Bodies Running

March is National Nutrition Month®

Houston – March is National Nutrition Month® and Harris County Public Health (HCPH) wants you to know how you can fuel for the future when planning meals and snacks to take care of yourself through each life stage.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of National Nutrition Month®, which was created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Academy is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals and is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education, and advocacy.

HCPH's Community Health and Wellness Division (CHWD) is dedicated to teaching residents about ways to eat healthier and increase physical activity to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In 2014, HCPH launched the Nutrition and Physical Activity (NPA) program to reduce the epidemic of childhood and adult obesity within Harris County. The NPA program utilizes the following evidence-based curricula to ensure optimal education for every age group:

- **Eat Play Grow** – Creative educational approach to teaching children ages two to five and their parents how to make healthy choices about nutrition and physical activity.
- **The Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)** – The CATCH program is designed to create behavioral changes by enabling children to identify healthy foods and increase the amount of physical activity they engage in each day. Ideal for elementary, middle, and high schoolers.
- **Cooking Matters** – Participants engage in hands-on activities aimed to improve their skills in planning and preparing tasty, healthy, low-cost meals. Ideal for people ages seven years and older.
- **Chronic Disease Prevention Classes** – Educates participants about the prevention and management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases.
- **Senior Classes** – Participants learn about various nutrition topics related to healthy aging.

Learning more about physical, mental, and nutritional health will help you develop healthy and healthful habits. Some tips to follow are:

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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- **Make sure to eat breakfast:** Start your day with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- **Make half your plate fruits and vegetables:** Make two cups of fruit and two and a half cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen, and canned.
- **Watch portion sizes:** Use measuring cups to help you compare your portions to the recommended serving size.
- **Get to know food labels:** Read the Nutrition Facts label to help you choose foods and drinks to meet your nutrient needs.
- **Fix healthy snacks:** Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals. Choose from two or more of the following groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein.
- **Drink more water:** Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water instead of drinks with added sugars.
- **Reduce added sugars:** Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutritional value.
- **Eat seafood twice a week:** Seafood – fish and shellfish – contains a range of nutrients including healthy Omega-3 fats.
- **Experiment with plant-based meals:** Expand variety in your menus with budget-friendly meatless meals. Vegetables, beans, and lentils can be great substitutes.
- **Slow down at mealtimes:** Instead of eating on the run or in front of the TV, practice eating mindfully.

To learn more, please visit [HCPH's Nutrition and Physical Activity website](#) or call 713-274-8546.

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